



## Bicycle Safety

Delivery, couriers and messengers

Bicycle delivery/courier/messenger workers are an important part of doing business in metropolitan areas and are an efficient way to make deliveries. They are also the most vulnerable groups of road users, which can expose them to hazards such as:

- Being struck by motor vehicles
- Falling
- Coming into contact with objects or materials
- Adverse or extreme weather conditions
- Poor air quality
- Pedestrian traffic
- Theft/robbery
- Riding during darkness
- Active construction zones within the city

In some cases, riders can be subject to time pressures, such as:

- **Being paid per delivery.** Delivery workers are usually paid per delivery and are required to fulfill assignments in a very short period of time. In addition, food-delivery drivers have to deliver food while it is still hot.
- **Working long hours outside.** Couriers may spend most of their day outside working and can be on the road for up to 9 hours.

Time pressures like these can cause riders to take shortcuts, which increases their exposure to hazards. Due to the distance most bicycle-delivery personnel cover and the amount of time they spend on the road, they are more likely to have accidents than other cyclists.



As an employer, you can best protect your workers by establishing a safe workplace. A good place to start is by developing and implementing an accident prevention program. More information is available at [www.SafetyProgram.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.SafetyProgram.Lni.wa.gov).

Since the bicycle delivery/courier/messenger environment contains hazards which are not always in an employer's direct control, conducting a job-hazard analysis is one way to identify and provide some measure of safety to your employees. Here is an example of a job hazard analysis which can meet your needs:



## Delivering or pick up of products, packages and other materials

Hazards	Ways to control hazards
Your path of travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Know your route.</li> <li>■ Travel the safest way to get to where you're going.</li> <li>■ Avoid areas under construction.</li> <li>■ Beware of animals, pedestrians, and other motorists that may move into your path of travel.</li> <li>■ Obey all traffic laws and rules.</li> <li>■ Stop at stop signs and red lights.</li> <li>■ Cross streets at marked intersection crosswalks.</li> </ul>
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include outdoor-heat exposure training in your accident prevention program so employees understand heat-related illness, how it affects their health and safety and how it can be prevented.</li> <li>■ Use studded tires for snow and ice.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always wear a helmet.</li> <li>- Wear sunglasses (when appropriate).</li> <li>- Wear durable shoes that cover the entire foot.</li> <li>- Wear gloves to protect hands and improve grip.</li> <li>- Dress for the weather, and use sunscreen during warmer months.</li> <li>- Wear high visibility coats, jackets, pants and vests (dependent on time of year).</li> </ul>
Working alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish check-in times.</li> <li>■ Include workplace violence prevention training in your accident prevention program.</li> <li>■ Provide cell phones.</li> <li>■ Provide a whistle.</li> </ul>
Working at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish communication using cell phones or cell phones with a 2-way function.</li> <li>■ During hours of darkness, every bicycle must have a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Front lamp emitting a white light visible to a distance at least 500 feet away.</li> <li>- Rear red reflector visible from a distance of at least 600 feet.</li> <li>- A lamp emitting red light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet may be used in addition.</li> <li>- A flashing light emitting diode visible from a distance of at least 500 feet may be used in addition.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Train workers on workplace violence awareness and prevention.</li> <li>■ Provide cell phones.</li> <li>■ Provide a whistle.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always wear a helmet.</li> <li>- Wear durable shoes that cover the entire foot.</li> <li>- Gloves may be worn to protect hands and improve grip.</li> <li>- Dress for the weather.</li> <li>- Wear high-visibility coats, jackets, pants and vests (dependent on time of year).</li> </ul>
Unbalanced loads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do not hand-carry items. When riding a bike, keep both hands available for steering and/or signaling.</li> <li>■ Secure items to bike in a manner that provides balance.</li> </ul>
Other motorists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If in a crosswalk (prior to crossing), do not assume you can just go.</li> <li>■ Always make eye contact with the driver(s).</li> <li>■ Allow vehicle to go first prior to crossing.</li> </ul>

## Bicycle Maintenance

Hazards	Ways to control hazards
Flat tires, broken chains, missing reflectors, work brakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employers must ensure that every bicycle used by employees as part of their work, regardless of who owns it, is equipped with safety devices required by state vehicle and traffic laws, including reflective devices and properly working brakes. In addition, train employees to inspect all equipment prior to each use and ensure the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bike fits the rider.</li> <li>- Emergency bike repair kit available.</li> <li>- Horn works.</li> <li>- Lights work (install head lamp and rear lights).</li> <li>- Reflectors and mirrors are intact and clean.</li> <li>- Appropriate places to carry items being delivered/picked-up.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Train employees to report unsafe conditions.</li> <li>■ Ensure that brakes allow the operator to skid the braked wheel(s) on dry, level, clean pavement.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b></p> <p>Wear gloves, and eye protection when using cleaning products.</p>

## People

Hazards	Ways to control hazards
Employer setting unrealistic timelines	Set reasonable delivery timelines to prevent bicyclists from taking unnecessary risks.
Contact with aggressive, drunken/drugged clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Train employees on workplace violence awareness and prevention.</li> <li>■ Provide a whistle.</li> </ul>
Robbers/muggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Give robber what they ask for.</li> <li>■ Train employees on workplace violence awareness and prevention.</li> <li>■ Provide cell phones.</li> </ul>

## Rider Prevention

**“Follow the procedures, policies, and/or training provided by your employer”**

Hazards	Ways to control hazards
Time pressure	Do not take shortcuts that put you at risk of serious injury/death.
Music, phones and other electronic devices	When riding, do not talk or text on phone, or listen to music using any headphone-type devices.
Not following state laws	<p>Riders must follow state laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use hand signals before initiating a turn.</li> <li>■ Ride as near to the right of the right-side through-lane as possible unless overtaking another rider or vehicle or initiating a left turn. Note: You may use the left lane of a one-way street if there are two or more lanes.</li> <li>■ Do not attach yourself to any other vehicle or ride more than two abreast.</li> <li>■ Obey all traffic laws. Do not run red lights, speed or use sidewalks.</li> <li>■ Always use dedicated bike lanes when available to limit exposure to traffic.</li> </ul>

Hazards	Ways to control hazards
Nutrition and hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Carry energy bars and gels for quick, frequent snacks while on the go.</li> <li>■ Drink plenty of water and/or sport drink to help prevent dehydration in warmer weather.</li> <li>■ Avoid caffeinated drinks.</li> <li>■ Follow your employer's policy on outdoor heat exposure.</li> <li>■ At the end of a shift, try to eat a good meal within 30 minutes of your last ride because that's when the body is most receptive to replacing fuel burned during exercise.</li> </ul>
Physical strain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make sure the bike fits you. If unsure of fit, work with a local bike shop to get it fitted.</li> <li>■ To help prevent or alleviate soreness in your: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Knees:</b> Use gears that are small enough they can spin easily to go fast, rather than pushing a really big gear slowly.</li> <li>- <b>Wrists:</b> Use gel-padded gloves to help cushion shock, and change positions on the handlebars frequently to help keep your grip loose. Keep wrists straight when gripping the bar.</li> <li>- <b>Neck:</b> Instead of an overly aggressive aerodynamic position, ride a little more upright. This also provides a better view of traffic.</li> <li>- <b>Low back:</b> Stand up to pedal, such as when climbing a hill.</li> <li>- <b>Seat:</b> Use a saddle with a pressure-relief cutout and adequate padding. Bicycle shorts or liners with a padded chamois may also help.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Are there specific workplace safety rules that apply to bicycle use and the rider?

No, but all employers are required to identify workplace hazards and find and apply ways to eliminate hazards. Additional requirements that may apply to your business include:

- Safety and Health Core Rules, WAC 296-800
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or PPE Hazard Assessment WAC 800-160
- Outdoor Heat Exposure WAC 296-62-095
- Safety Bulletin Board WAC 296-800-190

These topics and others can be found online in the A-Z topic index at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety).

### What other state laws apply to bicycle safety?

RCW 46.61, Rules of the Road includes bicycle safety. Below is a summary of the state laws:

#### Bicycles

- Every bicycle in use during darkness shall have a front lamp emitting a white light visible to a distance at least 500 feet away.
- Every bicycle in use during darkness shall have a rear red reflector visible from a distance of at least 600 feet.
- Every bicycle shall be equipped with a brake

enabling the operator to skid the braked wheel(s) on dry, level, clean pavement.

#### Riders

- Hand signals must be given before initiating a turn.
- Riders must not attach themselves to any other vehicle.
- Riders must ride as near as possible to the right side of the right through-lane unless overtaking another rider or vehicle or initiating a left turn.
- Riders may use the left lane of a one-way street if there are two or more lanes.
- Riders must not carry anything which prevents at least one hand on the handlebar.
- Riders must not ride more than two abreast.

Additional information on Washington State Bicycle Laws is available from the Washington State Department of Transportation at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/Laws.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/Laws.htm).

*Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.*

## Sample Daily Checklist

Rider's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person performing safety check, if different:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of safety check: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m. (circle one)

☐ Prepared for today's weather (wet, dry, hot, cold, windy, etc.)?

☐ Personal protective equipment:

- ☐ Eye protection
- ☐ Footwear
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Helmets
- ☐ Reflective clothing or vest

☐ Bike safety equipment:

- ☐ Brakes
- ☐ Horn
- ☐ Mirrors
- ☐ Tires
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Suitable method of carrying:

- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Rack or basket
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Personal safety items needed:

- ☐ Helmet-mounted video camera
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Drinking water
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Were any problems discovered during the safety check?

\_\_\_\_\_

How were they corrected? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

